

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

24 Cancelled
 Claims 25-62 (Cancelled).

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63. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 1) Hearing aid apparatus comprising:
 a first signal path having a microphone for receiving sound in a vicinity of a user, a processor for processing the sound into a processed sound, and a speaker for outputting the processed sound into a vicinity of an ear canal of the user;
 a second signal path for establishing communication between at least a portion of the first signal path and a location remote from the user; and
 a switch for automatically selecting the first signal path or the second signal path in response to a detected occurrence of a predetermined condition of the second signal path.

64. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 2) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, wherein the first signal path is selected when the hearing aid apparatus is in a hearing aid state. ✓

65. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 3) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, wherein the second signal path is selected when the hearing aid apparatus is in a communications state with a remote communications device. ✓

66. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 4) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, wherein the predetermined condition is a detected ring condition of a cell phone. ✓

67. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 5) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, wherein the predetermined condition is the absence of a detected active signal in the second signal path for a predetermined period of time.

68. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 6) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, wherein the second signal path is a two-way communication path with a telephone network.

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69. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 7) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, comprising:

a switch to manually select between the first signal path and the second signal path.

70. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 8) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, comprising:

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a switch to place the apparatus into a sleep state, wherein power to at least some components is shutdown.

71. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 9) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, comprising:

a memory to store a first set of sound processing control parameters for the first signal path, and for storing a second set of sound processing control parameters, different from the first set, for the second signal path.

72. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 10) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 71, wherein the first set of sound processing control parameters are selected based on a hearing impairment of a user.

73. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 11) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 72, wherein the second set of sound processing control parameters are selected based on the quality of a transmitted signal.

74. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 12) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 71, wherein the second set of sound processing control parameters are selected based on the quality of a transmitted signal.

75. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 13) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, comprising:

a switch for manually selecting the first signal path or the second signal path, such that when the second signal path is manually selected, the apparatus is automatically placed into a sleep state in response to the predetermined condition.

76. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 14) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 63, comprising:

a switch for manually placing the apparatus into a sleep state.

77. (Reinstated – Formally Claim 15) Hearing aid apparatus according to claim 64, comprising:

a switch for selecting a communications mode wherein the hearing aid state is disabled, and the apparatus can be switched between a communications state and a sleep state.

78. (New) A hearing aid comprising:

a microphone for receiving input sounds and converting the input sounds into a first electrical signal;

a processor for processing the first electrical signal to generate a second electrical signal;
a speaker for converting the second electrical signal to a speaker output;
a switch for coupling the speaker to the processor when the switch is in a first position,
and coupling the speaker to a remotely located communications device when the switch is in a
second position; and
a signal detector for generating a control signal in response to a detected signal, wherein
the switch alternates between the first and second positions in response to the control signal.

79. (New) The hearing aid of claim 78, wherein the microphone is coupled to the
remotely located communications device when the switch is in the second position.

80. (New) The hearing aid of claim 78, wherein the remotely located communications
device is a cellular telephone.

81. (New) The hearing aid of claim 78, wherein the detector monitors a condition
corresponding to the remotely located communications device.

82. (New) The hearing aid of claim 81, wherein the condition is a ring condition
indicating an incoming call on the remotely located communications device.

83. (New) The hearing aid of claim 82, wherein the condition is an active telephone
line indicating an outgoing call on the remotely located communications device.

84. (New) The hearing aid of claim 78, wherein the detector monitors usage of the
remotely located communications device and causes the switch to change from the second
position to the first position if the remotely located communications device is inactive for a
predetermined period of time.

85. (New) The hearing aid of claim 78, further comprising a second switch, the
second switch having a first position corresponding to a power conservation mode and a second
position corresponding to a normal use mode.

86. (New) The hearing aid of claim 78, further comprising a controller coupled to the
processor, the controller providing a first set of control parameters to the processor when the
switch is in the first position and a second set of control parameters to the processor when the
switch is in the second position.

87. (New) The hearing aid of claim 78, wherein the first set of control parameters is adapted to address a specific hearing impairment, and the second set of control parameters is adapted to address an identified deficiency in sound quality associated with the remotely located communications device.

88. (New) A hearing aid comprising:
a microphone for receiving sounds and converting the sounds into a first electrical signal;
a processor;
a speaker;
a switch for altering the hearing aid between hearing aid state and a bi-directional communication state, wherein during the hearing aid state the processor processes the first electrical signal to address a specific hearing impairment, wherein during the bi-directional communication state the microphone operates as an input device for a remotely located communications device, and wherein during the bi-directional communication state the speaker operates as an output device for the remotely located communications device; and
a signal detector for generating a control signal in response to a detected signal, wherein the switch alternates between the hearing aid and bi-directional communication states in response to the control signal.

89. (New) The hearing aid of claim 88, wherein the remotely located communications device is a cellular telephone.

90. (New) The hearing aid of claim 88, wherein the detector monitors a condition corresponding to the remotely located communications device.

91. (New) The hearing aid of claim 88, wherein the condition is a ring condition indicating an incoming call on the remotely located communications device.

92. (New) The hearing aid of claim 88, wherein the condition is an active telephone line indicating an outgoing call on the remotely located communications device.

93. (New) The hearing aid of claim 88, wherein the detector monitors usage of the remotely located communications device and causes the switch to change from the bi-directional communication state to the hearing aid state if the remotely located communications device is inactive for a predetermined period of time.

94. (New) The hearing aid of claim 88, further comprising a second switch, the second switch having a first position corresponding to a power conservation mode and a second position corresponding to a normal use mode.

95. (New) The hearing aid of claim 88, further comprising a controller coupled to the processor, the controller providing a first set of control parameters to the processor during the hearing aid state and a second set of control parameters to the processor during the bi-directional communication state.

96. (New) The hearing aid of claim 95, wherein the first set of control parameters is adapted to address a specific hearing impairment.

97. (New) The hearing aid of claim 95, wherein the second set of control parameters is adapted to address an identified deficiency in sound quality associated with the remotely located communications device.

98. (New) The hearing aid of claim 95, wherein the second set of control parameters is adapted to provide noise filtering.

99. (New) The hearing aid of claim 95, wherein the second set of control parameters is adapted to compensate for a specific hearing impairment prior to a third signal from the remotely located communications device being converted and output by the speaker.

100. (New) The hearing aid of claim 95, wherein the second set of control parameters is adapted to filter ambient noise received by the microphone.